

Arizona Rattlesnakes



- Western Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus oreganus*)
- Up to 63" long
 - Has venom twice as strong as Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake, but produces less venom



- Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus atrox*)
- Up to 66" long
 - Largest rattlesnake in the West
 - Responsible for more bites and deaths to humans than any other rattlesnake species in U.S.



- Sidewinder**
(*Crotalus cerastes*)
- Up to 25" long
 - Travels in side-winding motion
 - Only rattlesnake with horns over eyes



- Tiger Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus tigris*)
- Up to 35" long
 - Small head doesn't hold much venom, but venom is powerful

- Rock Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus lepidus*)
- Up to 33" long
 - Young use brightly colored tail to attract prey, but tail changes color as snake gets older
 - One of four rattlesnake species with special protection in Arizona



- Black-tailed Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus molossus*)
- Up to 48" long
 - Color can vary greatly from brown or beige to green or golden yellow



- Arizona Black Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus cerberus*)
- Up to 42" long
 - Young are vividly patterned and can look very different from adults



- Speckled Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus mitchellii*)
- Up to 51" long
 - Color can vary greatly from nearly white to pink, gray or brown
 - Color often matches their surroundings



- Ridge-nosed Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus willardi*)
- Up to 26" long
 - Gets its name from raised ridge of scales around front of snout
 - Arizona Ridge-nosed Rattlesnake is official state reptile
 - One of four rattlesnake species with special protection in Arizona



- Twin-spotted Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus pricei*)
- Up to 26" long
 - Small rattle sounds like insect
 - One of four rattlesnake species with special protection in Arizona



- Mohave Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus scutulatus*)
- Up to 50" long
 - Widely considered most toxic rattlesnake in U.S.
 - Easily confused with Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake



- Prairie Rattlesnake**
(*Crotalus viridis*)
- Up to 64" long
 - Reportedly used in famous Hopi snake dance ritual



- Massasauga**
(*Sistrurus catenatus*)
- Up to 22" long
 - Most primitive form of rattlesnake in U.S.
 - One of four rattlesnake species with special protection in Arizona



Rattlesnake Facts:

- Scientists have identified 36 rattlesnake species.
- Rattlesnakes live only in North and South America.
- 13 species live in Arizona, more than any other state.
- Rattlesnakes use the "loreal pit," a heat-sensing organ between the nostril and eye to locate prey and potential predators.
- These snakes have glands that make venom, much like human saliva glands make saliva.
- The rattle is made of keratin, the same material found in human hair and fingernails.
- The age of a rattlesnake cannot be determined by counting the segments of its rattle.
- Rattlesnake prey may include small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and centipedes.
- According to Arizona Poison Centers, less than 1% of rattlesnake bites result in human deaths.

Learn more about Arizona's rattlesnakes from the book "A Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona" available for sale at Arizona Game and Fish Department offices, and through free lessons from the department's environmental education program at azgfd.gov/focuswild.

